

AT THE WHITE HOUSE
WITH PIERRE SALINGER
AUGUST 31, 1962
5:30 PM. EDT
FRIDAY

MR. SALINGER: "Two small naval vessels, believed to be Cuban, fired upon an unarmed U. S. Navy aircraft at 2 p.m., on August 30, 1962."

Q. Two p.m. what time?

MR. SALINGER: Two p.m. local time.

"The attack occurred approximately 15 miles north of Cuba in and over international waters -- "

Q. "in and over"?

MR. SALINGER: "-- while the aircraft was on a routine training mission. Its crew of three were U. S. Naval Reserves on temporary active duty."

Q. "Reservists"?

MR. SALINGER: "Reserves".

Q. "on temporary active duty"?

MR. SALINGER: "on temporary active duty."

"In any such incident in the future where U. S. aircraft or Naval vessels --"

Q. Where "a"?

MR. SALINGER: "-- where U. S. aircraft or Naval vessels are fired upon in or over international waters while in peaceful performance of their duties, the United States Armed Forces --"

Q. "the United States Armed Forces"?

MR. SALINGER: Right. "-- will employ all means necessary for their own protection and will assure their free use of such waters. The authorities in Cuba are being informed through appropriate channels."

Now for BACKGROUND.

in Havanna. That note incorporates the information I have given you in this statement.

* * *

Q. Pierre, what is the relation of this point of attack to the coast of Florida? Fifteen miles north of Cuba would put it fairly close to Florida, but it would depend on what part of Cuba it is north of.

MR. SALINGER: I can't give you -- the Defense Department will be prepared to give you the back-up information the names of those aboard the plane.

For BACKGROUND:

* * *

The plane was not hit. It returned to United States soil with everyone aboard safe. Again for BACKGROUND, it was machine gun fire.

* * *

Q. What kind of plane was it?

MR. SALINGER: That you would have to get from the Defense Department.

Q. How many people were on it.

MR. SALINGER: Three people.

Q. Three Reservists.

Q. What do you mean by saying "will employ all means necessary"?

MR. SALINGER: What I am saying for BACKGROUND is:

* * *

Whatever planes or ships are in that area, are in or above international waters, they had better not fire on them.

* * *

Q. Presumably it means if necessary to continue using international waters they would be firing back.

MR. SALINGER: I will stand on the statement.

Q. For BACKGROUND, doesn't this become obvious that if there is another instance like this, we are going to shoot back?

* * *

MR. SALINGER: I would say for BACKGROUND that is true.

* * *

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Now for BACKGROUND.

* * *

For BACKGROUND, we have dispatched notes to the Cuban Government -- this is on the record -- we have dispatched notes to the Cuban Government -- this is on the record.

Q. Not part of the formal statement?

MR. SALINGER: No. -- through the Swiss Embassy in

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MR. SALINGER: I would say for BACKGROUND that is true.

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Q. Pierre, what kind of airplane was it?

MR. SALINGER: The Defense Department will have to give it to you.

Q. For BACKGROUND purposes, we did not shoot back at all?

* * *

MR. SALINGER: But not attributable to me. No, it was an unarmed plane.

END